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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: On August 13, Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to give significant news and editorial coverage to the damage caused by Typhoon Morakot and the on-going rescue efforts in central and southern Taiwan. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the mass-circulation Apple Daily discussed U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and the deteriorating military balance across the Taiwan Strait. The article concluded that "while the Ma administration is concerned that Taiwan will be marginalized if the island is not tilting toward China, what we see is that during the process of tilting toward China, Taiwan will be quickly marginalized in terms of the collective security of East Asia." End summary.

"Taiwan Being Skipped over"

Former DPP Legislator Lin Cho-shui opined in a column in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (8/13):

"The U.S. Department of Defense reported lately that the military balance across the Taiwan Strait has been tipped in favor of China since 2000 and that Taiwan no longer has its edge for air warfare [starting in] 2009. For Rand Corporation, a well-known U.S. think tank, the situation is even worse; [Rand] believes that China will have obtained overwhelming superiority in air warfare starting in 2010, and that once an air fight breaks out in the Taiwan Strait, it 'will basically be over' before the United States comes to [Taiwan's] rescue. Given such a terrible situation, and despite the Ma administration's efforts in negotiating [with Washington], the United States still has not decided to sell F16 C/D fighter jets [to Taiwan], let alone the Aegis-class frigates. The U.S. Congress, unable to tolerate it any more, passed a resolution demanding that the executive branch improve [the situation]. But still, the U.S. government appears to remain unmoved. ...

"The mainstream view in Taipei is that Taiwan is originally a stronghold in the United States' containment policy. Now that the United States has started a comprehensive strategic and economic dialogue with the rising China to work jointly in terms of the war on terrorism, non-proliferation and [both sides have agreed] to confront world economic and environmental issues, Washington will no longer adopt a containment [policy], so naturally it decides not to sell arms to Taiwan. Such a view is shortsighted. It goes without saying that the United States attaches great importance to the rise of China, but the strong aggressiveness that China has demonstrated in terms of its strategy is something against which Washington has to guard. ... [Washington] started to take preventative moves [against China] starting with [former President George W.] Bush, and its course has remained unchanged even after [President Barack] Obama took office. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as a result, emphasized lately that [the United States] wants to return to Southeast Asia. ...

"Each country ranging from South Asia to East Asia, including the United States and Japan, is strengthening its military deployments to guard against China, and evidently, they have all skipped Taiwan. The impact of Washington's decision to cease arms sales [to Taiwan] will be very profound. Due to production [capacity] limits for some

weapons systems, ... freezing arms sales to Taiwan now would mean that the United States has abandoned its planning for Taiwan's defense armaments for the foreseeable future. The [military] imbalance across the Taiwan Strait will become a long-term [phenomenon] and the situation will only deteriorate. As a result, while the Ma administration is concerned that Taiwan will be marginalized if the island is not tilted toward China, what we see is that during the process of tilting toward China, Taiwan will be quickly marginalized in terms of the collective security of East Asia. ..."

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